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Ohio Supreme Court Reverses Glen E. Bates' Conviction and Death Sentence; Agrees that Racially-Biased Jury Deprived Black Defendant of Fair Trial

Today, the Ohio Supreme Court announced its decision to reverse Glen E. Bates' 2016 conviction and death sentence and grant him a new trial due to the ineffectiveness of Mr. Bates' counsel at trial. The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) [filed an amicus brief](#) in February 2018 arguing that the defense counsel was constitutionally inadequate by failing to object to individuals with clearly stated racial bias to sit on Mr. Bates' jury. In February 2019, LDF [argued before the Ohio Supreme Court](#) emphasizing that Mr. Bates's conviction and death sentence were infected with racial bias.

"The Ohio Supreme Court agrees that the Constitution required Mr. Bates' defense attorney to object to a juror exhibiting racial bias and that the failure to do so undermined confidence in Mr. Bates' trial," said LDF Senior Deputy Director of Litigation [Jin Hee Lee](#). "We hope this decision will convey the utmost imperative to eliminate all forms of racism from the courtroom. The Constitution promises that, and it was the duty of Mr. Bates' lawyer to ensure that promise was kept in his case."

Three times in the last few years, the U.S. Supreme Court has reversed or questioned the validity of criminal sentences based on concerns about the reliability and legitimacy of jury verdicts infected by racial bias. In LDF's case, [Buck v. Davis](#), the Supreme Court ruled that the possibility of race infecting a jury's decision "is a disturbing departure from a basic premise of our criminal justice system: Our law punishes people for what they do, not who they are." The *Buck* decision recognized that the stereotype of black men as "violence prone" can have a powerful and deeply harmful influence on members of the jury in death penalty cases where jurors assessed the dangerousness of the defendant. A juror in Mr. Bates' trial wrote in a juror questionnaire that she believed Black people tended to be more violent than people of other races or ethnicities—precisely the type of harmful racial stereotype condemned by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Buck*.

Read the Ohio Supreme Court's decision reversing Glen E. Bates's conviction [here](#).

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Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation's first civil and human rights law organization. LDF has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal

rights. LDF's Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF.

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